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ABSTRACT

Focused on top managers working within administrative systems, this book identifies the major principles governing these managers' behavior. Since the organization's business and the manager's own career interests determine what occurs in an administrative system, the signals managers send out to underscore their own competence are also identified. The system studied was the central office of a school district, though the author applies his conclusions to administrative systems in general, believing them to be more similar than different. Chapter 1 introduces three interrelated themes: (1) the difficulty of distinguishing among behavior that is in the best interest of the organization, the subunit, or the individual manager; (2) the reliance on the administrative system's structure for action clues; and (3) the frequently ambiguous, subjective nature of performance assessment. Each remaining chapter treats a different aspect of administrative systems management. Chapter 2 discusses the nature of administrative systems. Chapter 3 discusses research approaches used to study administrative work. The fourth chapter analyzes and interprets the behavior patterns emerging in the administrative system studied. The fifth chapter discusses how managerial behavior patterns affect the general functioning of administrative systems. Chapter 6 focuses on possible biases in managers' information searching and assessment behavior. Chapter 7 describes the tasks that managers rate as being particularly important, and chapter 8 analyzes how certain structural and environmental changes influence organizational functioning. The appendix explains the study's setting (the central office of a large central city school district), manager characteristics, and data collection methods. An index is provided. (193 references) (MLH)

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